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Agenda item 66 (a)
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 14 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In my capacity as the representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the outcome of the African Union second Pan-African Forum on Children: midterm review, adopted in Cairo on 2 November 2007, entitled "Call for accelerated action on the implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012)" (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 66 (a).

(*Signed*) Leslie Kojo **Christian**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Ghana to the United Nations
Representative of the Chairman of the African Union

08-21233 (E) 290108

Annex to the letter dated 14 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

Call for accelerated action on the implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **We**, the Ministers of AU Member States responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights and welfare of children in our respective countries, meeting in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 29 October to 2 November 2007 considered and reviewed the progress made in implementing the 2001 Declaration and Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children which constituted the African Common Position to the 2002 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. We focussed our deliberations on the ten priorities set out in the Plan of Action, namely: Overall Framework; Enhancing Life Chances; Overcoming HIV/AIDS; Realising the Right to Education; Realising the Right to Protection; Participation of Youth and Children; Actions at all levels; International Partnership; Follow-up Actions and Monitoring; and Call to Action.

2. **We** reaffirm commitments made in making **Africa Fit for Children**, among others, in:

- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) adopted by the African Heads of State and Government - July 1990;
- The Declaration and Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children adopted in 2001 which was also Africa's contribution to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in New York - May 2002;
- Plan of Action on African Decade on Persons with Disabilities – 2002;
- The Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa adopted by the Third Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in September 2004;
- Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, 2004;
- Decision - Assembly/AU/Dec.75(V) on Accelerating Action for Child Survival and Development in Africa to meet the MDGs, in particular MDG 4 on reducing child mortality and morbidity – Sirte, July 2005;
- Decision - Assembly/AU/Dec.92(VI) on the Second Decade of Education in Africa (2006-2015) – January 2006;
- The Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – January 2006;
- The Abuja Call for Accelerated Action toward Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa - May 2006;
- The African Youth Charter - July 2006;

- Africa Health Strategy of 2007-2015.

3. **We** further reaffirm all other relevant declarations, decisions, resolutions, recommendations, and policy documents at all levels, including the UN Millennium Declaration and the MDGs on improving the livelihood and well-being of Africa's children.

4. **We** are concerned that the situation of children in Africa remains critical due to socio-economic, cultural, political challenges including conflicts, violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking, natural disasters and generally preventable diseases, poverty, and harmful traditional practices.

5. **We** note with concern the special vulnerability of the girl child and children with disabilities; special attention needs to be accorded across all priority actions to help them access services and realize their rights with dignity.

6. **We** are aware that although a number of significant achievements have been made in Africa in the promotion of child survival, protection, development and participation, the progress has been slow and thus targets set in the Africa Fit for Children and the World Fit for Children are yet to be attained.

7. We recognize the need to strengthen mechanisms for accountability to ensure more consistent and comprehensive progress during the next five years.

II. SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

8. The well-being of Africa's children depends first and foremost on the well-being of their families and communities. Africa has among the highest levels of absolute poverty in the world. Government programmes and their outreach to eradicate poverty require considerable effort and support. This has major implications for the health, education and protection of the rights of children. As always, children pay the penalty for a situation over which they have no control or responsibility.

ENHANCING LIFE CHANCES

9. The Declaration and Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children sets out an ambitious series of measures to ensure that every child in Africa has a good start in life, can grow and develop in a child friendly, nurturing environment of love, acceptance, peace, security and dignity. Considerable progress has been made towards the achievement of these goals. Although new initiatives and developments since the declaration show some promise, the impact is not significant.

10. The life chances of Africa's children is amongst the lowest in the world. Almost 5 million African children die every year from preventable and treatable diseases. Since Africa Fit for

Children was adopted in 2001, an estimated 28,800,000 African children have died of causes that are preventable.

11. Driven by this understanding, in 2007 the African Union Ministers of Health adopted the new Africa Health Strategy. As they noted, "While Africa has 10% of the world's population, it bears 25% of the global disease burden and has only 3% of the global health work force." The new strategy aims to strengthen health systems in a comprehensive manner. It deals with critical areas including reducing neonatal morbidity and mortality, combating malaria and malnutrition. It offers a clear set of directions for dealing with the conditions and diseases that are undermining the life chances of Africa's children.

12. At the same time, it is also understood that non-medical interventions such as clean drinking water and improved sanitation are crucial to the health and nutrition of children and their families.

OVERCOMING HIV AND AIDS

13. The Declaration and Plan of Acton of Africa Fit for Children called for reducing the incidence of HIV amongst young people aged 15-24 years by 25% by 2005 and preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV by 25% by the same year. In fact, PMTCT has indeed been reduced by 25% in several countries. Outside Southern and Eastern Africa, the incidence level of the virus among young people has largely remained low. At the same time, additional investment of millions of dollars is available and is being used to fight the pandemic on every front.

14. Still, the magnitude of the pandemic can hardly be exaggerated, especially in Southern and parts of Eastern Africa. In 2006, 2 million children had been infected as had 10 million youth between 15 and 24 years. Of these, three-fourths are female. Only a very small portion of young people who require treatment have access to the same.

15. In some parts of the continent, around one-third of pregnant women are infected and around one-third of the children born to these women will also be infected with the virus. Without treatment, more than half of these children will die before their second birthday. Mother-to-child transmission is the second most common mode of HIV transmission and can be reduced through timely anti-retroviral therapy. However, despite the progress noted above, the necessary drugs are not widely available and in some rural areas the access is very low.

16. One of the unanticipated consequences of the AIDS pandemic for Africa has been the emergence of a virtual nation of children who are orphaned, growing faster than the worst fears predicted. By 2010, it is estimated that the number of children without one of the parents will total 53 million.

17. In 2006, African Union Heads of State and Government, meeting in a special summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, adopted the Call for Accelerated Action toward Universal access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria services in Africa by 2010. Clearly, these diseases remained, as they had been in 2001, the greatest survival issues affecting Africa's children and youth.

REALIZING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

18. The Declaration and Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children reiterated the educational goals and commitments that had been emphasised in other Conferences and Summits of Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Education where they committed themselves to Education For All with an emphasis on provision of universal access to quality, free and compulsory basic education, and ensuring equal access to girls and boys. With the abolition of school fees by a number of countries, more African girls and boys now attend school than ever before. Progress towards Education For All has come closer to reality. Enrolments increased between 1990 and 2005 from 57% to 70%, and in some countries there is improvement in gender parity as well.

19. Nevertheless, educational challenges continue to be a major issue in Africa. An evaluation of the first Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006) revealed that "most of the goals" were not achieved. Among the issues that urgently need to be tackled are the low completion and high drop out rates, access to education facilities and services for children with disabilities, low transition rates to post-primary education, teacher training, inadequate recreational and sports facilities in schools, technical and vocational training. as well as abuse of children especially adolescents and girls. The number of children out of school continues to rise in some countries. Early childhood development including pre-primary schooling also needs increased focus in order to enhance access. The education systems are still struggling with major resource constraints including, shortage of trained teachers.

20. Inadequate attention has been paid to higher education and research, as a source of human resources and new knowledge for the enrichment of all levels of education. The Ministers also identified the need for state of the art management information systems to facilitate knowledge-based educational planning, monitoring and follow-up.

21. In the face of these realities, African Ministers of Education have ushered in the Second Decade of Education in Africa, 2006-2015, with a comprehensive Plan of Action designed to meet the formidable challenges ahead.

REALIZING THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION

22. The Declaration and Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children commits state parties to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. There is inadequate data on most issues of child protection. This includes children affected by armed

conflict, sexual exploitation of boys and girls, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and child marriage, child labour including worst forms of labour.

23. Although some progress has been made, it is still grossly inadequate. There is now an increasing awareness and recognition of violence against girls being a major problem at home, community and even schools. In recent years, considerable attention is being paid to female genital mutilation. Although, initial results are promising, a major continent-wide effort is needed for its elimination. Trafficking for purposes of prostitution, pornography and household servitude has grown rapidly across many African countries. Early and forced marriages remain a harsh reality for millions of young girls. Cultural traditions, customary laws and religious practices are often used to justify such unacceptable and destructive practices.

24. Despite the attention given to the issue, many African children are still affected by armed conflict. Children with disabilities are stigmatized and denied educational opportunities.

25. While some harmonization and domestication of laws have been accomplished, more remains to be done. Only 41 African countries have ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Children's rights are seldom accorded the same priority that society does for adult's rights. Few children enjoy the rights that have been articulated in the ACRWC, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and do not have access to legal protection and remedial measures. Many UN protocols designed for the protection of children have not yet been ratified by some countries.

26. While the seriousness of these many injustices are widely recognized and while certain halting steps forward have been taken, the gap between policy and practice remains very considerable. Africa's children deserve from their governments protection from threats to life and respect for their human dignity.

PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

27. The Declaration and Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children affirms "the right of youth and children to participate". Some preliminary initiatives have been launched in various parts of the continent to implement this goal. The African Youth Charter, 2006 provides, among others, the right of youth to participate in the development of the continent and in decision-making "at local, national, regional and continental levels of governance".

28. Despite the promises made, the reality is that meaningful participation of children in affairs of state, society, community and family is extremely rare. It should be recognised that a meaningful and well informed participation of children and adolescents not only leads to a better understanding and possible solution to the problems they face, but is also one of the most effective ways to enhance their social development, self esteem as well as respect for others and the need for responsible behaviour.

III. CALL FOR ACCELERATED ACTION

29. We, the Ministers of AU Member States responsible for the promoting the rights and welfare of children, reaffirm our commitment in achieving the targets of the 2001 Plan of Action and commit to the following priority actions in each of the areas:

1. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

a) All AU Member States to ratify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, by end of 2008;
b) domesticate the Charter and enact appropriate laws or amend laws to bring them in line with the Charter by 2010;
c) accelerate legal reform to ensure all children are protected by comprehensive legislation in line with the African Charter and other international human rights standards;
d) harmonize existing laws on children at national level;
e) requests AU to develop an additional protocol to the ACRWC on elimination of involvement of children in armed conflict;
f) develop an appropriate policy framework within all Ministries dealing with children to accelerate actions for realizing the rights of children and achieve concrete results as noted in this Call for Action.

2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

a) establish adequately resourced and mandated structure(s), such as national observatories, ombudspersons on child rights, that will include children as members;
b) establish appropriate structures to provide leadership, oversight and accountability for implementation of laws, policies and programmes for children;
c) set up functional mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of inter-sectoral programmes for children, that would involve all relevant Ministries and Departments as well as civil society, private sector and institutions represented and led by children themselves;
d) set up a joint task force drawn from the African members of the UN Committee on Rights of the Child and the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child with adequate regional representation to examine the feasibility of harmonizing and simplifying reporting formats and to examine opportunities for mutual learning as well as options for adding value to each other's processes, when it comes to reporting and review of reports from countries in Africa.

3. MOBILIZING AND LEVERAGING RESOURCES FOR AFRICA FIT FOR CHILDREN

a) allocate sufficient resources in the national plans, Poverty Reduction Strategies and the supporting Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks and budgets for implementing various

elements of the Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children with a focus on marginalized children, including those from poor families, vulnerable, children who are orphaned and children with disabilities;

b) enhance cooperation among stakeholders for learning lessons from good practices around resource mobilization and explore multi-country proposals for seeking funding from bilateral and international partners as well as from the private sector for accelerating the achievement of the goals in the Plan of Action of the Africa Fit for Children;

c) allocate adequate resources to strengthen social protection measures for children, especially the most vulnerable including children with special needs and those who are orphaned;

d) Allocate sufficient resources for structures created to address children's issues.

4. ENHANCING LIFE CHANCES

a) strengthen health systems in order to provide good and quality maternal and child health services and develop health centres and hospitals that are child friendly, in line with the Africa Health Strategy;

b) scale up essential interventions to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality as well as reduce neonatal mortality;

c) scale up a minimum package of proven childhood interventions based on successful strategies such as Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) and Integrated Management of Childhood and Neonatal Illnesses (IMNCI) as part of national health policies and plans, poverty reduction strategies and health sector reforms, consistent with the Decision AU/Dec.75 (V) on Accelerating Action for Child Survival and Development in Africa to meet the MDGs;

d) support family and community based actions that enhance children's health, nutrition and well-being including safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene as well as appropriate young child feeding practices and food security measures when needed.

5. OVER-COMING HIV AND AIDS

a) scale up universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support (linking with other health measures on promoting reproductive health and reducing Tuberculosis, Malaria and other related diseases) with an emphasis on adolescents, young girls, women, children living with HIV and AIDS and the most vulnerable segments of the society;

b) scale up programmes for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and AIDS;

c) support measures that will assure primary prevention and protection as well as address the social context of HIV and AIDS that makes young girls, adolescents and children more vulnerable;

d) support initiatives to foster positive attitudes towards those affected, and address stigma and exclusion.

6. REALIZING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

a) implement the goals of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, 2006-2015;
b) ensure safety of boys and girls in schools, provide for quality child friendly schools that will ensure provision of safe drinking water, segregated toilet facilities for boys and girls and incorporate school health and school feeding, as well as guidance and counseling services, as measures that will enhance quality of learning and reduce drop outs of children;
c) ensure universal access to comprehensive quality basic education including early childhood care and education as well as preschool education, for both girls and boys with special attention to reducing disparities and addressing the rights of the marginalized children, including those from poor families, children on the streets, children with disabilities, children in situations of armed conflict and children out of school;
d) strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to include data on access, retention and achievement as well as educational processes, such as pedagogical techniques and learning outcomes;
e) develop and expand sports infrastructure at schools and promote extra-curricular activities for children.

7. REALISING THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION

a) ensure universal birth registration through comprehensive measures including campaigns and appropriately resourced systems;
b) put in place a comprehensive juvenile justice system that is consistent with the provisions of the ACRWC including rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law;
c) promote and implement integrated national strategies comprising zero-tolerance, backed by appropriate amendment to criminal codes and relevant legislation enforcement and raising awareness to abandon harmful traditional practices such as female genital cutting/mutilation and early marriage;
d) promote and implement multi-sectoral programmes on ending violence against children, including neglect, abuse, sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking guided by the findings and recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children as well as support activities such as lifelines and safe havens to rehabilitate and reintegrate children victims of abuse, sexual exploitation, rape and trafficking;
e) implement measures to prevent conflict through integrating peace education and promoting effective participation of children, consistent with international humanitarian law and the provisions of ACRWC, protect children from the impact of armed conflict and include children in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation activities as well as implement the recommendations of the 10 years review of the Graca Machel study on 'Children in situations of Armed Conflict'.

8. REALISING THE RIGHT TO CHILD PARTICIPATION

a) Promote the right to participation of all children (particularly those who are marginalized, children from poor families, children with disabilities and children who are orphaned and vulnerable) based on their evolving capacities through establishing appropriate consultative fora including child rights clubs, children's parliament, and associations;
b) create a safe and enabling environment for children's participation and provide them with access to appropriate and useful information, listen to their views and support them to participate in decision making and in search of solutions about issues affecting their lives through optimal use of social communication channels and interactive media;
c) provide for full and effective participation of children in all aspects of celebrating the Day of the African Child;
d) document good practices of child participation vis-à-vis how they enhance and accelerate achievement of results for children, for learning lessons and wider application;
e) promote children's participation in sports and cultural activities.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

30. The Declaration and the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children, 2001 suffered from lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework. The review, therefore requests:

Member States to:

a) use the framework for monitoring and evaluation through the national observatories and the coordinating mechanisms to review and track progress, identify gaps and find remedial measures on an annual basis;
b) submit biennial progress reports on status of implementation of the PoA and the Accelerated Call to the AU Organs through the African Union Commission.

AU Commission to:

a) develop a framework for monitoring and evaluation of this Call for Accelerated Action with appropriate baselines, targets and indicators for measuring progress at country level to allow inter-country comparisons, develop continental databases, include findings from research, share knowledge and good practices for scaling up interventions to achieve goals for children;
b) elaborate a ***"State of Africa's Children Report"*** every two years;
c) conduct a review on progress made in implementing this Call and the Plan of Action every five years;
d) strengthen the capacity of the ACERWC to follow up on the monitoring of key provisions of the Plan of Action and the Call;

e) use the information generated from the annual reports of Member States for ensuring the inclusion of children's issues in the African Peer Review Mechanism.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child *to*:

a) undertake country visits and also use the monitoring and evaluation framework of the Call for Accelerated Action as supplementary information to review the State Parties reports.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

31. The AU Commission will ensure that all policy documents related to children on the continent are disseminated as widely as possible amongst all major stakeholders:

a) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to:

i) establish a social development desk, where it does not exist, to coordinate all social issues including children's programmes;
ii) raise awareness on and promote the rights and welfare of the child in accordance with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children;
iii) work closely with Member States, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other stakeholders to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action on Children as well as other children's programmes;
iv) develop regional child policies in collaboration with partners and lead the agenda for children in the region;
v) collaborate and exchange information with the AU Commission on all matters related to children;
vi) take the Call and Africa Fit for Children as a regional issue and leverage resources to meet the additional needs identified for accelerating implementation of high impact interventions.

b) The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) to:

i) advocate and lobby with Member States for the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
ii) lead in advocacy towards implementing the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Plan of Action on Children, as well as the Accelerated Call for Action;
iii) monitor and report cases of violation of children's rights, particularly in conflict and other emergency situations.

c) Other AU Organs (especially Pan-African Parliament, ECOSOCC, Peace and Security Council) to:

i) accord high priority to the Call for Accelerated Action and the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children on their agenda and play meaningful roles in implementing these commitments;
ii) include the promotion of children's rights and welfare in their specific programmes;
iii) work in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child on child related activities.

d) Development Partners to:

i) provide technical and financial support to Governments to continue to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children as well as the Call for Accelerated Action;
ii) accord high priority to financing various elements for scaling up actions to achieve results for Africa fit for Children;
iii) collaborate with the AU Commission and Member States to promote, disseminate and implement the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children and the Call for Accelerated Action.

e) Civil Society to:

i) create network of civil society organizations to support the dissemination, implementation and monitoring of the Call for Accelerated Action and the 2001 Plan of Action;
ii) provide relevant information to the AU Commission to assist in compiling progress reports, and also the State of the Africa's Children report.

f) Children's Groups *to*:

i) participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Call for Accelerated Action and the 2001 Plan of Action;
ii) mobilize themselves to use all available fora to bring children's perspective in decisions and programmes that affect children.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

32. **We** hereby,

- Mandate the current Chairperson of the African Union to submit this Call for Accelerated Action as Africa's contribution towards the Mid-term Review of the World Fit for Children at the UN General Assembly Commemorative High-Level Plenary Meeting to be held in December 2007.

- Call for measures to be taken at all levels to implement the commitment made in the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children and the Accelerated Call for Action.

- Call for the dissemination of the Call for Accelerated Action as widely as possible.

United Nations A/62/654

General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Agenda item 70 (e)
Promotion and protection of human rights: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Letter dated 11 January 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am pleased to inform you that, on 27 to 29 November 2007, Spain organized an Expert Group Meeting in Madrid entitled "Making it work: civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". The outcome of the Meeting is the Declaration of Madrid, which establishes priority areas of action to ensure the participation of civil society in the implementation and follow-up of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 70 (e).

(*Signed*) Iñigo **de Palacio España**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

08-21499 (E) 250108 280108

Annex to the letter dated 11 January 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

"Making it work: civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"

DECLARATION OF MADRID

Expert Group

Madrid, 27 November 2007

We, the participants of the Expert Group Meeting *Making it work -Civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,* convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, held in Madrid, Spain, from 27 to 29 November 2007 make the following recommendations to Member States of the United Nations:

Would like to start thanking the host organizations, the United Nations, the Government of Spain and Fundacion ONCE, for convening this meeting, which has allowed a fruitful discussion on the way forward in terms of the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (DPOs) as well as NGOs which accept DPO leadership (Allied NGOs*) in the implementation process of the CRPD.

We, the participants of the Expert Group Meeting,

Convinced of the fundamental contribution the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) will make for the full enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and human rights by persons with disabilities;

Convinced of the paradigm shift to a human rights based model of disability, which this Convention clearly embodies and which will mean fundamental changes in legislation, policies and programmes;

Convinced that the CRPD demonstrates that human rights and development are a single stream, that human rights cannot be effective without inclusive development and development could not be achieved without the full respect of human rights for persons with disabilities, the Convention being a clear framework for the rights based approach to development.

Convinced of the fundamental relevance of involving persons with disabilities through their representative organizations (DPOs) in all stages and levels of the implementation process of the Convention;

Urge all UN Member States to accelerate the ratification process of the Convention in order to ensure a swift entry in force of the CRPD,

And recommend that,

* In this document, "allied NGOs" and "allied organizations" indistinctly mean organizations that, although they do not represent people with disabilities, are engaged or are interested in disability issues and recognize and accept the leadership role of people with disabilities and their representative organizations in disability issues.

I. When the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities enters into force:

1. States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, consistent with the letter and spirit of the Convention and particularly Article 34, paragraphs 3 and 4 adopt the following criteria in the selection of candidates for the Committee of Experts:

   - Independence
   - Participation of experts with diverse disabilities
   - Expertise in human rights and disability
   - Credibility within the diverse disability community
   - Equitable regional and cultural representation
   - Gender balance

   And adopt the following procedural standards in the selection of candidates:

   - Involvement of representative national DPOs in the selection process
   - Transparency, including publicising the CVs of the candidates for the Committee of Experts on the UN website;

2. The Conference of States Parties, mandated by article 40 paragraph 1:

   a. Considers substantive matters related to the implementation of the CRPD, including activities that will help to fulfil the obligation under article 32 to undertake measures of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realisation of the purpose and objectives of the CRPD;

   b. Is open to all UN Member States, whether States Parties or not;

   c. Facilitates the active involvement of representative DPOs and allied NGOs, similar to the level of involvement achieved in the Ad Hoc Committee including:

      i. Contribute to setting the agenda, preparation and planning;

      ii. Participation as experts, including through the provision of financial support, where necessary;

d. Serves as a forum for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and lessons learned on strategies and practices to implement the Convention in a spirit of cooperation;

e. Undertakes intersessional work, where appropriate, to continue and follow up on activities begun in the Conference and plan the following one;

3. OHCHR assists the Committee of Experts, when it is established, to facilitate the active engagement of representative DPOs and allied NGOs with the Committee of Experts, including in those ways indicated in Article 36, paragraph 5 and Article 38, paragraph (a) of the Convention;

4. UN Member States strengthen the Secretariat for the CRPD within DESA and OHCHR increasing their resources, and explore the feasibility of establishing a specific UN agency to promote the rights of persons with disabilities;

5. Member States establish a UN initiative for capacity building of DPOs, designed and developed in consultation with such DPOs, to participate in implementation of the Convention;

6. Member States support the establishment of a liaison mechanism, designed and implemented in co-operation with the representative DPOs, to facilitate the participation of DPOs in the preparatory and intersessional work for the Conference of States Parties and the Committee of Experts;

7. Member States review the mandate of the Voluntary Fund, in view of including the possibility of financing the participation of DPOs from low and middle income countries and those representing indigenous persons with disabilities in the Conference of States Parties and in the Committee of Experts;

8. The UN Secretariat ensures full accessibility, including information, communication and premises, for all CRPD related UN meetings;

9. The UN Secretariat, in cooperation with DPOs, develops a comprehensive handbook on implementation of the CRPD;

10. Member States support the establishment or strengthening of independent, fully inclusive national DPO coalitions, open to NGOs which accept DPO

leadership, focusing on the implementation of the CRPD as an intrinsic element of the involvement of DPOs as mandated in Article 4.3 of the CRPD;

11. Member States in accordance with article 8 of the CRPD immediately undertake wide awareness raising campaigns on the CRPD promoting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities;

12. Member States undertake translation of the CRPD into national languages in co-operation with DPOs;

II. Furthermore, in order to ensure the full implementation of the CRPD, we recommend that:

13. Member States allocate sufficient national resources and promulgate policies and legislation for the implementation of the CRPD and to do this in close involvement with representative DPOs;

14. Other UN human rights treaty committees, the Human Rights Council and all human rights mechanisms consider the human rights of persons with disabilities as articulated in the CRPD, in co-operation with DPOs;

15. Member States shall use the newly initiated Universal Periodic Review process to include the relevant issues pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities and include DPOs in the national consultation process when preparing their submissions to this process;

16. National human rights institutions include the rights of persons with disabilities in their work and to do it in consultation with national representative DPOs;

17. Member States, which are either donor or beneficiaries of international development co-operation,

    a. Mainstream disability in international development cooperation following the principles of the CRPD with adequate bodies for implementation, follow-up and monitoring, working in collaboration with DPOs;

b. Include disability specific initiatives and programs, particularly those directed to provide capacity building to persons with disabilities and their organisations; and

c. Provide specific capacity building on development cooperation issues to ensure meaningful involvement of DPOs in these processes;

18. UN agencies, including the Breton Woods institutions:

a. Review their policies and programmes in light of the CRPD;

b. Contribute to the implementation of the CRPD through establishing a specific disability department, as well as taking into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes; and

c. Consult and co-operate with DPOs in all activities related to disability, including the interagency meetings;

19. The Commission on Social Development address disability issues consistent with the CRPD in all of its work, particularly related to the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit.

"Nothing about us without us"

United Nations A/62/655

General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Agenda items 17 and 18

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Letter dated 18 January 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I write to draw your attention to recent terrorist activity and violations carried out against Israel, as well as relevant developments in the region, in connection with the Security Council briefing and open debate on the Middle East scheduled for 23 January 2008.

Situation along the Blue Line

Although noted efforts have been made to implement Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007), the situation along the Blue Line remains precarious. Moreover, during this reporting period, a number of grave violations occurred, further emphasizing the need for and the urgency of full implementation of resolution 1701.

On 8 January, two Katyusha rockets were fired on northern Israel from southern Lebanon. The rocket attacks occurred on the same day as another terrorist attack, in which two Irish peacekeepers serving under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were injured in a roadside bombing. While Israel welcomed the statement to the press by the Council condemning the violations, the attacks underscore the importance of implementing resolution 1701 for international peace and security.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to refer to four clusters of concern relating to the resolution.

1. **Arms embargo**: Weapons continue to be transferred through the Syrian-Lebanese border, in violation of the arms embargo. Indeed, the 20 October position paper submitted by the Lebanese Government to the Security Council implicates Syria in facilitating transfer of weapons. This is an issue of great concern for international security, as seen in

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recent Council presidential statements and the report of the Secretary-General on resolution 1701.

2. **Rearming of Hizbullah**: Moreover, some of these weapons are destined for areas south of the Litani River, where a rearmed Hizbullah maintains a formidable presence.

3. **The two abducted Israeli soldiers**: Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, kidnapped on 12 July 2006 by Hizbullah, remain held by their captors, without any sign of life given or any visit by the Red Cross. Resolution 1701 is explicit in its call for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers, and my delegation calls on the Council to implement these provisions, without delay.

4. **Demarcation of the Blue Line**: The incident on 7 January in the Halta area, where Israel detained a Lebanese suspect who crossed the Blue Line, is a reminder of the importance of demarcating the Blue Line. Israel returned the suspect to Lebanon after a short investigation. We hope that marking the Blue Line, as well as placing warning signs, will be instrumental in preventing future incidents.

Situation in the Gaza Strip

Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, which continued again on Monday this past week, have been met with an escalation of Palestinian violence and terrorist activity, specifically by Hamas terrorists who control the Gaza Strip.

Hamas's brutality is seen not only in its attacks against Israel, but also in its cynical abuse of humanitarian convoys and corridors, such as the smuggling of bomb-making materials on humanitarian trucks and the firing of rockets at border crossings. While Israel works to facilitate humanitarian assistance, Palestinian terrorists do everything in their capacity to thwart these efforts and provoke Israeli reactions. A marked contrast can be seen in the difference between Israel's and Hamas's humanitarian efforts. Since June 2007, Israel has permitted more than 9,000 Palestinians to enter Israel to seek medical treatment, while Hamas has fired more than 1,500 rockets and mortars.

States have the responsibility to protect their citizens, and Israel will continue to act in self-defence, in accordance with its inherent right under article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Israel carries out its counter-terrorist operations with respect to the applicable rules of international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

During this reporting period specifically, spanning 23 December 2007 until the present, some 300 Qassam rockets and mortars were fired by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip. The majority of these rockets fell on the southern city of Sderot, whose civilian population has been subjected to these senseless, violent, and indiscriminate attacks aimed at disrupting the fabric of daily life.

According to a recently released study by Natal, the Israel Center for Victims of Terror and War, since 2001, when rocket attacks from Gaza began, 28 per cent of adults and 30 per cent of children in Sderot have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Moreover, 75 to 94 per cent of all Sderot children aged 4 to 18 exhibit symptoms of PTSD, such as sleep and concentration problems.

On 7 January 2008, six Qassam rockets and eight mortars were fired at Sderot. One rocket hit a home, wounding a 17-year-old boy. Later in the day, Palestinian terrorists disguised as a couple holding hands opened fire on IDF soldiers at the Erez Crossing. The shooting either set off a bomb carried by the female terrorist, or she detonated herself.

On 10 January, Palestinian terrorists fired another five Qassam rockets at Israel, including one that hit a house in Sderot. Four people sustained injuries, including a 17-year-old girl, who suffered shrapnel wounds, and a boy, who was hurt while attempting to take cover.

On 15 January, in the span of 24 hours, more than 100 rockets and mortar shells were fired at the cities of Sderot and Ashkelon. On the same day, a 20-year-old foreign volunteer from Ecuador was shot and killed by a Hamas terrorist sniper from Gaza while working in the fields of Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha. This deliberate singling out of a civilian target with precision weapons signifies an escalation in Hamas's terrorist activity, in addition to its policy of indiscriminate rocket fire.

In the ensuing days, from 16 to 17 January, some 10 Israeli civilians were injured after 50 Qassam rockets and 30 mortar shells were fired from Gaza. In Sderot, the Red Alert siren was sounded more than 14 times. Additionally, a Grad Katyusha rocket was found near a residential area in Ashkelon.

Hamas terrorists still hold Corporal Gilad Shalit, now in his twentieth month of captivity. The Red Cross or any other humanitarian agency has been denied permission to visit him and verify his condition. The refusal to provide details regarding Gilad Shalit's condition is cause for great alarm.

Throughout the month, Palestinian terrorists continued to smuggle weapons, money and other illegal munitions into Gaza, including via the southern border. Tunnels, burrowed deep beneath the ground, have been used by terrorists to move weapons.

On 29 December 2007, Israeli security forces stopped a truck in the West Bank en route to Gaza carrying 6.5 tons of potassium nitrate hidden in bags marked as sugar. Potassium nitrate is used to make explosives and power the rockets used by terrorists in the Gaza Strip. On 15 January, Israeli security services thwarted another attempt to smuggle chemicals for the manufacturing of explosives into the Gaza Strip. Two tons of bomb-making material, enough to produce 500 rockets, were found disguised as humanitarian aid at the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Following the return of Palestinian pilgrims to the Gaza Strip, Israel discovered that Hamas terrorists had smuggled some $100 million during that time. Hundreds of Gazans returning from the hajj to Mecca were allowed direct entry via Egypt, contrary to an earlier agreement with Israel. Hamas used the money to purchase more munitions and arms, and fuel its campaign of terrorism against Israel. The money smuggling underscores the importance of ensuring security at the border crossings, as called for in Security Council resolution 1373, among others.

Situation in the West Bank

Palestinian violence against Israelis also continued in the West Bank.

On 28 December 2007, Palestinian terrorists opened fire on three hikers in a drive-by shooting, killing two of the men, Cpl. Ahikam Amihai and Sgt. David Rubin, both off duty IDF soldiers. The third hiker, a woman, who managed to hide during the attack, was later treated for shock.

On 17 January 2008, Palestinian terrorists fired on Israelis in Beit Hadassah in Hebron. Fifteen bullets were fired, of which two penetrated houses and another hit the playground of a nursery school.

It is clear that Palestinian terrorism is the main impediment to peace and security in our region. Israel has demonstrated its commitment to advancing the bilateral process and continuing negotiations. But the Palestinian Authority must end the violence and terrorism against Israel, as is required according to its obligations under the Road Map, before any final agreement can be reached. Similarly, all States in the region should refrain from supporting and aiding the terrorist organizations, as required by various relevant Security Council resolutions.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council for the briefing scheduled for 23 January 2008.

(*Signed*) Daniel **Carmon**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-second session
Agenda item 17
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 18 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations committed from 8 to 14 January 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 17, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 18 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israeli violations, acts of aggression and other activities from 8 to 14 January 2008, inclusive

Air violations

On 9 January 2008, between 1959 and 2017 hours, two Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh, then proceeded north as far as Jubayl, turned south and departed over Naqurah.

Between 2024 and 2210 hours, two Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh, then proceeded north as far as Tripoli and circled over the northern and southern regions before departing over Bint Jubayl.

On 11 January 2008, between 1123 and 1223 hours, two Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over Alma al-Sha'b, then proceeded north as far as Shikka. Then they circled over Shikka and Beirut, flying alternately over the land and the sea, before departing over the sea off Naqurah.

On the same day, at 2120 hours, an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft heading north violated Lebanese airspace off Naqurah, then circled off Beirut and over the southern regions before departing the next day, 12 January, at 0210 hours over the sea off Naqurah.

On 12 January 2008, between 1000 and 1500 hours, an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the regions of Qir'awn, Suhmur, Libbaya, Qilya and Dallafah before turning south, then departing over Naqurah.

Between 2130 and 2255 hours, an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace off Naqurah, then proceeded north as far as the coast of Beirut and circled off Beirut before turning south and departing over the sea off Naqurah.

On 13 January 2008 at 1059 hours, six Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, four over Rumaysh and the other two over the Shab'a Farms. They then circled over Beirut and the southern regions. The six aircraft then departed over Kafr Kila, two of them at 1125 hours and the other four at 1155 hours.

Between 1200 and 1230 hours, two Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh, then circled over Beirut, Western Bekaa and the south before departing over Aytarun.

At 2344 hours, an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace off Tyre, then circled off Sidon and Tyre before departing the next day, 14 January, at 0010 hours over the sea off Naqurah.

On 14 January 2008, between 1117 and 1245 hours, two Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over Khiyam, then proceeded north as far as Beirut. They then circled between Beirut and the south before departing over the sea off Naqurah.

Sea violations

None.

Acts of aggression in the field

On 8 January 2008, at 1815 hours, enemy Israeli forces directed a searchlight for two minutes and 15 seconds from the Zar`it barracks towards the Lebanese Army positions at Tarbikha and the Marwahin triangle.

At 2055 hours, enemy Israeli forces directed a searchlight for 20 seconds from the Zar`it barracks towards the Lebanese Army position at the Marwahin triangle.

At 2255 hours, enemy Israeli forces directed a searchlight for one and a half minutes from the Zar`it barracks towards Jabal Balat and the Marwahin triangle.

On 9 January 2008, between 0830 and 0930 hours, two Israeli Merkava tanks left their position south of Ramiyah and proceeded towards the position opposite Birkat Risha. On the way back, one of the two tanks stopped and aimed its gun at a Lebanese Army position at Jabal Balat. The tank then left the area and returned to its position.

At 1845 hours, enemy Israeli forces directed a searchlight for 5 seconds towards the Marwahin triangle.

On 10 January 2008, at 1904 hours, an Israeli patrol consisting of three Hummer vehicles directed a searchlight for 30 seconds towards the plain of Marun al-Ra`s, then for 5 seconds towards the 11th Brigade position.

Between 2330 hours and midnight, an Israeli patrol directed a searchlight towards vehicles using the road between Kafr Kila and `Adaysah.

On 14 January 2008, at 1030 hours, an Israeli foot patrol consisting of eight soldiers and a Hummer 2 jeep stopped opposite the 10th Brigade checkpoint at the Fatima gate. The Israeli soldiers hurled insults at checkpoint personnel before departing at 1155 hours in the direction of al-Mutillah.

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Sixty-second session
Agenda item 132
Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 18 January 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

1. At present 15 Member States are in arrears under the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states:

> A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.

2. The minimum payments necessary to reduce the amounts owed by those Member States on their contributions so that they remain below the gross amount assessed for the preceding two full years (2006 and 2007) are as follows:

Member State	*Minimum payment (United States dollars)*
Benin	19 800.00
Cape Verde	20 900.00
Central African Republic[a]	380 618.67
Comoros[a]	773 300.00
Dominica	6 810.00
Dominican Republic	883 400.00
Guinea-Bissau[a]	532 900.00
Liberia[a]	986 200.00
Palau	11 200.00
Papua New Guinea	66 100.00
Paraguay	191 400.00
Sao Tome and Principe[a]	637 000.00

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Member State	*Minimum payment (United States dollars)*
Somalia[a]	1 065 300.00
Tajikistan[a]	642 290.00
Vanuatu	13 600.00

[a] **In its resolution 62/1 of 15 October 2007, the General Assembly decided that the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and Tajikistan should be permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its sixty-second session.**

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon
Secretary-General

United Nations A/62/657/Add.1

General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Agenda item 132
Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 29 January 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

Further to my letter dated 18 January 2008 (A/62/657), I have the honour to inform you that Vanuatu has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon
Secretary-General

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